REPORT

Of the Committee of The Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto, appointed to report on the best means to be adopted for raising contributions towards the Stipends of the Clergy in the various Parishes and Missions of this Diocese. Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Society, held on the 3rd of April, and ordered to be printed.

1. Until the members of the Church at large are induced, from a principle of faith in God's promises, and love to His holy cause, to look upon it as a privilege to be permitted to honour the Lord with their substance, and with the first fruits of all their increase, the manifold evils of the voluntary system, in its ordinary development, must surely be acknowledged by every reflecting member of our communion.

2. The Church in this Diocese being, to a certain extent, under this system, must, to a similar extent, be exposed to these evils,—evils which will ultimately be more fully developed unless guarded against by timely precaution.

3. In addition to that unholy and palpable tendency of the voluntary principle to tempt the pastor to deal unfaithfully by his flock, it is a system which, from the peculiar organization of the Church, appears calculated to exert a more injurious influence over her than over religious communities of merely human origin.

4. While unity is an essential feature of the Church at large, unity of feeling and of action is absolutely necessary to the progress and prosperity of every Diocese within her pale; but the principle under consideration has a direct tendency to injure, if it cannot destroy that unity, because every Clergyman who is absolutely and directly dependent upon his flock for maintenance, and who can by any means make himself popular among them may—if he be so inclined—be tempted to exhibit in his own flock a defiance of Episcopal authority which must even be regarded the great element of Diocesan unity.

5. The unmutilated Gospel has ever excited the opposition of the human heart, and, consequently, he who determines to speak fully and faithfully concerning "Christ and the Church," will frequently, in spite of all the discretion he can use, have to encounter much opposition; and should it be, that he is either partially or wholly dependent for his maintenance upon the voluntary system, he may be reduced to straits, and perhaps to poverty, because, though diligent and conscientious, his faithfulness may destroy his popularity.

6. The Clergy are men of like feelings with others, and it is often difficult even for duty to silence the dictates of delicacy. This, however, must to a considerable extent be done by every Clergyman who would teach his flock the scriptural doctrine, that the labourer in spiritual things is worthy of his hire, for the bulk of his congregation will generally regard him when addressing to them such admonitions as more anxious for the augmentation of his means than for the welfare of his flock. It may be said that the Clergy are bound to teach the whole truth, whether it bring upon them good report or *evil* report, and that this misapprehension or misrepresentation is a part of that cross, which, as the messengers of their Master, they are called to bear. But, though this may be true, it is to be feared that it is a truth which is not acted upon, for there is reason to think that the duty alluded to, is neither taught by the Clergy nor practiced by the laity as it ought to be, to the great loss and detriment of both parties.

7. Seriously impressed with the gravity of these disadvantages, your Committee would respectfully suggest that contributions from the various parishes and missions in this Diocese, to the general mission fund of the Church Society, seems to them a plan, the apparent tendency of which would be to remedy these evils. That it appears to have been a principle acted upon in the primitive Church, in which, up to the fifth century, the whole contributions of the people, destined to the maintenance of the Clergy, were paid into a common fund.

8. It is a system which, if it could be adopted, would manifestly tend to promote unity in the Church, and to combine the advantages of greater actual in-

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dependence in the Clergy, with a salutary control in the proper quarter.

9. The adoption of the system suggested would also tend to save the Clergy from any strong temptation to keep back from the people committed to their charge wholesome but unpalatable truth, by rendering them, to a reasonable extent, independent of their people, while at the same time any decided falling off in the contributions of the parish or mission, or any positive refusal to fulfil the pecuniary obligations under which they had voluntarily come to the Church Society, would, in many cases, afford a test by which to form some judgment of indiscretion, incapacity or neglect of duty on the part of the Clergyman officiating therein.

10 There is little reason to doubt that one great cause why the members of our communion are so backward in contributing to the support of the Church, is to be found in the fact that they are not sufficiently taught their duty in this respect by their legitimate instructors: and, unquestionably, the motive which induces so many of the Clergy to fail in admonishing them on this subject is the natural feeling of delicacy before alluded to, and which many among them acknowledge their inability to overcome. The adoption, however, of the system which your Committee respectfully suggest would tend, in a great degree, to remove this obstacle, and many, it is believed, would zealously exert themselves in procuring contributions to a general fund, who could not be induced to make a similar effort in order to urge their people to effect a direct augmentation of their individual stipend.

11. Your Committee are strongly inclined to think that the duty of the laity, in contributing of their earthly things, to those who minister to them in spiritual things, would under the system suggested, be much more generally and emphatically taught and much more effectively performed than it is at present.

12. Your Committee having thus adverted to some of the most prominent disadvantages of the present mode of raising contributions, towards the stipends of the clergy in the parishes of this Diocese, and having pointed out the benefits which they are inclined to think, would flow from the adoption of the system which they have now suggested, would proceed to the consideration of some of the details, which would be necessary in carrying the plan into operation.

13. (1) The first point to be considered is the *amount*, which any parish or mission applying to the Bishop for the services of a Clergyman shall be required to raise.

The recent regulations of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, (to devise the best mode of complying with, which, is the object of your Committee) require that in addition to a parsonage house, every parish or mission shall raise at least the sum of £50 currency per annum, towards the stipend of the clergyman, which sum, or any further sum, up to the extent of £100, that Society agrees to double, giving pound for pound.

Your Committee would therefore suggest that the Bishop of the Diocese, judging from such information as he shall possess, of the resources or ability of any parish or mission, making application for the services of a clergyman, shall name the amount between these two extremes which such parish shall pay into the General Mission Fund of the Church Society, on which the Society shall undertake to pay to the clergyman such a stipend (not exceeding the sum guaranteed by the parish) as the Bishop shall appoint.

(2.) With reference to the *mode* in which such contributions shall be raised within the several missions of the Diocese, whether by direct subscriptions, pew rents, or otherwise; your Committee feel that this is a subject which must to a great extent be left to the discretion of the various parishes, merely suggesting that in the older settled townships, or in neighbourhoods having easy access to markets, the full amount of the contributions shall be paid in money; and that such localities shall not take advantage of the suggestions hereinafter offered, for allowing the remoter townships to pay in kind, unless the clergyman of such mission, shall specially request it.

(3.) Another most important consideration is the manner in which the sums to be raised by the several parishes shall be secured to the Church Society.

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Your Committee are of opinion, that in the great majority of cases, the safety of the Society will require, that, when it undertakes to pay a stipend to a clergyman in lieu of direct contribution from his parishioners, the amount to be paid to the general mission Fund of the Society from such parishes shall be previously secured, and if possible for a period of three years, by an agreement signed by some substantial members of the congreation who will kindly undertake, that if the Church Society shall pay to their clergyman the sum named by the Bishop, the amount shall be remitted by them to the Society, which amount they would then of course exert themselves to collect from the congregation.

(4.) From some acquaintance with the rural neighbourhoods of this Diocese, your Committee are convinced that in many well settled parts of the country, it would be difficult, and in some cases perhaps impossible, to comply with the requirements of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, if the amount of contributions expected from such neighbourhoods were required to be paid in money.

They would consequently suggest that every reasonable facility ought to be afforded to the system of contributing in kind, and they conceive that such facility might be offered without in any degree interfering with the system of contributions to a general fund which is advocated in this report, by simply requiring the Churchwardens to transmit a receipt from the clergyman for the value of such contributions as had been made in kind; which receipt would be received by the Treasurer of the Society, and credited to the mission as if it was a payment made in money; and charged to the Clergyman as so much paid to him by the Society.

(5.) Another point which though almost self evident, would still have to be clearly understood is, that the Society could assume no further responsibility than would be warranted by the express obligations received from the several missions, and that if on the expiration of such obligation, the Churchwardens or other parishioners shall decline to renew it, the clergyman of such parish or mission shall have no claim upon the Society for the continuance of his stipend, but shall lay his case before the Bishop for the time being, to be dealt with according to his discretion.

(6.) Your Committee would further suggest that it should be very explicitly understood, that though the Church Society would thus become the medium through which the stipends of the clergy would be paid, that circumstance would in no respect influence the disposal or appointment of them to their several spheres of duty, but that the nomination to, or patronage of all ecclesiastical preferments will of course rest as it does at present.

(7.) It now remains for your Committee to express their views upon the last clause of the resolution which has called them to the performance of their present duties, and which requires them to direct their attention to the question "whether in some cases it "might not be expedient to support a clergyman for a "time, depending upon his exertions to secure sub-"scriptions to the society from the mission to which "he is appointed."

Your Committee are aware that cases are not unfrequent where neighbourhoods originally settled by a large proportion of the members of the Church, in consequence of long but unavoidable neglect have become indifferent to her ministrations, and have grown reconciled to their state of spiritual destitution. To expect them while in this state of apathy, to make the exertions required by the recent rules of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; in order to supply that which they have almost ceased to regard as a want, is scarcely reasonable. Could they, however, enjoy, though but for a season, those spiritual privileges from which they have been so long debarred; it would rekindle their love for the ordinances of God's Church, and incline them to make suitable exertions to secure their continuance. Influenced by these considerations your Committee desire to suggest that it appears to them highly expedient that the Bishop should be enabled by this Society, to send a clergyman to such localities, for the space of one or two years, on the conditions contemplated by the resolution, giving the members of the Church distinctly to understand, that at the con-

clusion of that period, they must be prepared for one of two things—either to contribute the required sum towards the stipend of their clergyman, or to lose his services.—The question, however, by what means the funds necessary to enable the Society to effect this object are to be raised, is one of considerable difficulty, and here with all deference and with every feeling of gratitude to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, your Committee would respectfully express their apprehension that the recent regulations affecting this Diocese, passed by that venerable and munificent body may be found to act as a very serious check upon the extension of the Church in the more destitute and remote parts of this Diocese. The indifference arising from long continued destitution, prevent such localities as your Committee have just referred to from making the necessary effort required by the regulations of the Society—while in the newer and more remote regions poverty precludes the hope of their being able for some few years, to come up to the standard which it demands—by contributions either in money or kind—and this naturally brings your Committee back to the principal object of this report, and affords another argument in favour of contributions to a General Fund. There are in this Diocese several endowed parishes and others which enjoy the advantages of a virtual endowment in as far as their Pastor derives almost his entire income from sources extraneous to, and independent of the parish or mission in which he ministers. Now if these and other more wealthy parishes, which at present do comparatively little for the extension of the Church, could be induced to contribute in some degree in proportion to the privileges they enjoy, a surplus mission fund might gradually arise, which might be most usefully expended in assisting those remote or more destitute missions, contemplated by the concluding clause of the original resolution.

As it is by no means impossible that difficulty might arise in assigning individual contributions to the benefit of the parish to which the donor strictly belonged, in consequence of the present somewhat indefinite limits of the various missions, your Committee would further suggest that, in their opinion, it would tend to the harmonious working of the plan which is here advocated, and indeed of that mode which is at present in operation, if, by the authority of the Bishop, the territorial limits of each parish were to be as accurately defined as circumstances would permit, subject nevertheless to such further alterations as might appear proper to the Diocesan.

In conclusion, your Committee would observe that, though sensible the subject on which they have been called to report is not free from difficulties, they are, nevertheless, strongly disposed to think that the adoption of the system of contribution on the part of the missions of the Diocese to a general fund would operate beneficially,—that it would tend to unity of feeling and energy of action, and that, while it placed the Clergy in a more comfortable position, it would never render their independence of their people such as to prove a temptation to neglect of duty.

All which is respectfully submitted.

W. Stewart Darling,
Chairman.

March 25th, 1850.

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